



MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE

LINDA McCULLOCH

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STATE ADMINISTRATION

Exhibit No. 5
Date 3/11/2015
Bill No. HB 69

HB 69: Update Training Requirements for Election Administrators
Senate State Administration, Rm 335
March 11, 2015 @ 3:00 p.m.
Secretary of State Linda McCulloch's Testimony

- Good afternoon Madam Chair, members of the committee. For the record, I am Linda McCulloch, Montana Secretary of State.
- Thank you Representative Custer for sponsoring this legislation on behalf of my office.
- House Bill 69 would increase the training requirements for election administrators from attending a training once every other year, to include an additional 6 hours of continuing education each year.
- As the chief elections official for the state of Montana, the Secretary of State is responsible for obtaining and maintaining uniformity in the application, operation and interpretation of Title 13 election laws.
- The goals of the additional training that would be required in this bill are to:
 - Provide a forum in which Montana election administrators can annually learn about best practices in the administration of elections.
 - Provide an educational program that will build the skills of election administrators to effectively conduct secure, accurate and well-run elections.
 - Enhance the trust of Montanans in the state electoral process by annually certifying the professional competence of Montana's election administrators.
- Training requirements for election administrators have been in place since 1979.
- Montana election administrators, many of whom are also clerks and recorders, are busy, busy officials, and it is often hard to find the time to attend optional trainings. By making continuing education a requirement in law, our message is

that election administration deserves the time and commitment necessary for a person to be able to competently and professionally administer state elections.

- The job of election administration is a complex one, and processes, procedures and statutes change frequently.
- Additionally, there is frequent turnover in election offices. Just this year alone there are 10 brand new election administrators, some of whom have no election administration experience.
- The 6 hours in this bill proposal was arrived at by surveying similar sized states and averaging other state's mandatory training requirements.
- Our intent is to not make the training onerous for any county, and in fact this training requirement is similar to mandatory programs for other county elected officials that have ongoing education opportunities including Commissioners, Justices of the Peace, Treasurers and Clerks of District Court.
- Annual training formats that can count towards the 6 hours of continuing education include:
 - Training that we currently offer for new election administrators, online training on various processes including the statewide voter registration system, and WebEx trainings on specific topics such as ballot and equipment security, voting system testing, post-election audits, conducting recounts and the electronic absentee system for military and overseas citizen voters.
- As we currently do now, we will work with any county that lacks resources to send their election administrator to an on-site training location.
- The Secretary of State's office will track the training requirements for the purposes of issuing certifications to election administrators, and election administrators will be able to check online at any time to see what their certification status is and to see what training opportunities are available at any given time.
- Thank you for your time this afternoon.